



February 19, 2025

The Honorable Marc Korman, Chair
Environment & Transportation Committee
250 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: HB 741 – Hunting - Nonlead Ammunition, et al., FAVORABLE

Dear Chairman Korman, Vice Chair Boyce and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Animal Wellness Action and Center for Humane Economy, we are here in full support of Delegate Allen's bill to phase-out the use of lead ammunition for hunting. This bill is about environmental protection and health.

We worked closely with DNR Secretary Josh Kurtz, DNR staff and the hunting community to engineer this compromise after an extensive hearing and debate in the Senate Education, Energy & Environment Committee last year. Last year's bill was a two-year phase-out. This year it's expanded to a four-year phase-out on deer, rabbits and squirrels. This phase out will apply only to the enumerated species listed on Page 4, lines 6-17.

It does not prohibit the possession, sale or use of lead ammunition. If you want to use lead ammunition at the practice range, or to buy ammunition in Maryland and go hunting for elk in Wyoming, you are free to do so.

The cost to move to copper bullets instead of lead is de minimis. The accuracy and lethality of copper ammo is superior to lead. Just ask our Special Ops on Sniper Patrol why they use copper instead of lead ammo. In fact, our U.S. Military uses copper bullets.

We know that there is no safe level of lead in any animal – human or non-human. https://www.cdc.gov/biomonitoring/lead_factsheet.html. "No safe blood lead level has been identified." As DNR acknowledges, the scientific evidence is compelling with over 500 studies indicating there is no safe level of lead for humans or animals.

I am appending the link of one peer-reviewed study published in *The Journal of American Pediatrics* (2024) and reported by Brown University, “Firearm-related Lead Exposure and Child Lead Levels in the United States”, that shows the direct connection with children getting impacted by the use of lead in firearms. Other studies show a decline in IQ of these children and others due to lead intake.

<https://www.brown.edu/news/2024-03-01/firearms-lead>

You will see and hear testimony that conclusively shows you the fragmentation of lead ammo that buries deep into the muscle tissue of the animal, especially deer, and is usually not removed after the animal carcass is dressed and winds up unknowingly ingested.

With the use of lead ammunition, we are destroying the ability of bald eagles, owls, mallards and others to reproduce and live healthy lives. For these reasons and those to follow in testimony, we urge a favorable report on HB 741.

Respectfully submitted,
Gil Genn